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PURSUIT

CONCLUSION

the AMAZING SPIDER-MAN®

THE END OF THE HUNT...

...AND THE MOST SHATTERING REVELATION OF ALL!

BAGLEY 93

HE FINDS THE TRACER ON A FAMILIAR TOMB-STONE, ABOVE A FRESHLY-DUG GRAVE. AN INVITATION, HE ASSUMES. OR PER-HAPS...

...A REMINDER.

AS IF HE NEEDS TO BE REMINDED OF ALL HE SUFFERED HERE.

OF THE HORROR OF BEING BURIED ALIVE.

HERE LIES SPIDER-MAN SLAIN BY THE HUNTER

HE CLOSES HIS EYES AND HE'S DOWN THERE AGAIN, STRUG-GLING TO BREAK FREE OF THE SUFFOCATING COFFIN...

...DESPERATELY CLAWING HIS WAY UP-- NEVER **FAR** ENOUGH, NEVER **FAST** ENOUGH!-- TO LIFE, BREATH, FREEDOM.

IT WAS **KRAVEN** WHO DID IT TO HIM.

HERE LIES SERGEI KRAVINOFF

KRAVEN THE HUNTER

FREE AT LAST

AND WITH THE COWARD-LY PULL OF A TRIGGER, ROBBED HIM OF VENGEANCE, AS WELL.

"MURDERED" HIM, ROBBED HIM OF LIFE AND HOPE, USURPED HIS VERY IDENTITY.

BUT THAT WAS YEARS AGO. HE MADE HIS PEACE WITH THE HUNTER; MADE PEACE WITH HIMSELF...

HE WAS WRONG.

HE TELLS HIMSELF THAT THEY WEREN'T **REALLY** HIS PARENTS: THAT THEY WERE SIMULACRA. INHUMAN CONSTRUCTS SENT TO DESTROY SPIDER-MAN.

HE SHOULD BE...

...SECURE IN THE KNOWLEDGE THAT, HOWEVER HARD HIS LIFE MAY BE, WHATEVER ELSE HE MIGHT SUFFER, IT COULD NEVER BE **THAT** BAD AGAIN.

HE TELLS HIMSELF THAT HE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN BETTER; THAT AFTER YEARS OF DEALING WITH THE JACKALS AND VENOMS AND GOBLINS HE SHOULD BE **USED** TO THE MIND GAMES AND MANIPULATIONS. THE CONSTANT INVASION OF HIS PRIVATE LIFE.

...BUT HE'S **NOT.**

BECAUSE, INSIDE OF HIM, THERE'S A LITTLE BOY WHO NEVER STOPPED **MOURNING** THE MOTHER AND FATHER HE LOST TOO SOON. WHO NEVER STOPPED PRAYING FOR A **MIRACLE.**

EVEN AS THE ADULT DOUBTED THE PEOPLE WHO CLAIMED TO BE **RICHARD** AND **MARY PARKER**, THAT LITTLE BOY **BELIEVED** WITH ALL HIS HEART...

...AND MOURNED **AGAIN**, WHEN HE LOST THEM A SECOND TIME.

BUT THE TIME FOR MOURNING IS **OVER**...

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ONE NAME POUNDS LIKE A DRUMBEAT IN HIS BRAIN.

ONE NAME THUNDERS FAR LOUDER THAN THE STORM.

CHAMELEON.

CHAMELEON!

CHAMELEON!

IN HIS MIND'S EYE, SPIDER-MAN SEES THE FACES THAT HAVE HAUNTED HIS NIGHTS...

...SHATTERING HIS DREAMS, MURDERING HIS LOVED ONES, TURNING EVEN HIS BEST FRIEND AGAINST HIM...

THE MAN WHOSE IDENTITY RUNS LIKE MERCURY. A FEATURELESS NOBODY...

...WITH THE POWER TO BE **ANYBODY.**

...AND HE WONDERS:

WERE **ALL** OF THEM THE CHAMELEON? HAS **ONE MAN** BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL THE YEARS OF PAIN?

HE KNOWS, OF COURSE, THAT IT'S IMPOSSIBLE. ILLOGICAL. BUT HE WONDERS JUST THE SAME. AND, FOR A MOMENT, AT LEAST...

ROWRRR

...HE BELIEVES IT.

NICE TOUCH. THIS IS KRAVEN'S MANSION, AFTER ALL--

--SO WHY NOT TRY TO STOP ME THE WAY THAT HE WOULD?

BUT THE THING IS--

--YOU'RE NOT GOING TO STOP ME.

I'M COMING FOR YOU, CHAMELEON--

--EVERY SINGLE ONE OF YOU--

--AND NO MATTER WHAT FACE YOU TRY TO HIDE BEHIND--

--I'LL FIND YOU--

--AND I'LL KILL YOU, DO YOU HEAR ME?

I'LL KILL YOU!

What have I done?

What have I done?

He's out of his mind! Look at him!

More of an animal than the beasts I sent to slay him!

What made me think that I could ever do what the Hunter did? I'm not Kraven--

--I'm a fool!

An imposter!

A...chameleon!

All I ever wanted, Sergei, was to be like you. To stand as *tall* as you did.

To walk with the *pride* and *power* of a *Kravinoff*.

When we were boys together in Russia, you were my model. My inspiration. I studied you with the devotion and intensity of a scholar.

I knew you... knew your every thought, your every need... far better than you knew yourself...

...and I tried, with all my soul, to be the finest friend you ever had.

And, oh dear Sergei...

SMACK

...what you gave *me* in return!

Not just friendship-- but life. You gave me *life*, Sergei! Sharing your potions with me... staving off old age and disease and death.

After all you did for me... all we meant to each other... how could I stand by and let Spider-Man *live*?

He drove you to a base and cowardly end: death by your own hand. And for *that* he must be punished.

And who better to do it than I? *Dmitri Smerdyakov*-- who wanted nothing more than to *become* you-- and who, this day...

...finally gets his *wish*.

Smerdyakov may know fear. But he is a chameleon... without a face, without a soul.

I am Kravinoff now. *I am Kraven!*

And the *Hunter* will not be denied.

THERE'S A DARK JOY IN THIS THAT SPIDER-MAN HAS NEVER KNOWN.

HE'S NEVER ALLOWED HIMSELF THIS KIND OF FREEDOM. HE'S ALWAYS STRUGGLED TO UPHOLD SOME ILL-DEFINED MORAL CODE.

AND WHAT GOOD HAS IT DONE HIM?

NO MORE CONTROLS, HE THINKS, AS HE BEGINS TO BEND THE TIGER'S NECK; AS THE ANIMAL'S BONES REACH THE BREAKING POINT. NO MORE MORALITY.

NO--

--MORE--

HE CAN'T.

FOR ALL THE BOILING RAGE, FOR ALL THE HURT AND MADNESS--HE CANNOT...HE WILL NOT...TAKE THIS CREATURE'S LIFE.

CHAK!

HE HATES HIMSELF FOR HIS SOFTNESS AND COMPASSION. HATES HIMSELF FOR ALWAYS DRAWING LINES BETWEEN WHAT'S RIGHT AND WHAT'S NOT.

I'M NOT GOING TO TAKE MY ANGER OUT ON SOME ABUSED "PET," CHAMELEON--

--BUT WHEN I GET MY HANDS AROUND YOUR NECK--

TONIGHT, AN INNER VOICE WHISPERS, WE'LL CROSS THE LINE.

TONIGHT WE'LL BE SAFE AGAIN. STRONG AGAIN.

--I WON'T STOP!

This...lunatic isn't the Spider-Man I've known all these years!

I don't understand what's happened to him!

He and Parker must be as close as Kravinoff and Smerdyakov.

It's my own fault For letting other people tell me what to do!

That plan...creating constructs of the Parkers...it's set Spider-Man OFF somehow! Made him...crazy!

KLIK

Why do I let myself get talked into these things?

Why can't I ever *trust* my own judgement?

But now... there's *no one* to order me.

Now I will lead Spider-Man on to death... and the victory will be mine alone.

No longer the snivelling underling. No longer the toady and fool.

I am the master... of Spider-Man! Of *all* of them!

I am *Kraven!*

(Smerdyakov!)

Kraven!

(Smerdyakov!)

I

am

NOTHING.

SPIDER-MAN KNEW, BEFORE HE REMOVED THE MASK, THAT AN EMPTY FACE WOULD BE WAITING. HOLLOW EYES STARING BACK INTO HIS.

THE COFFIN, THE BODY... THESE ARE JUST CHAMELEON'S WAYS OF TRYING TO UNNERVE HIM...

...TO REMIND HIM OF THE "DEATH" HE EXPERIENCED HERE, ALL THOSE MONTHS AGO.

SKRASH!

AS IF HE **NEEDS** REMINDING.

BUT IT'S NOT THE COFFIN THAT DISTURBS HIM: IT'S THAT DEAD AND VACANT **FACE.**

IS ***THAT*** WHAT I AM, *HE WONDERS*; AS MUCH A FACELESS MAN AS THE CHAMELEON?

SO BEATEN AND BRUTALIZED THAT PETER PARKER HAS SIMPLY... FADED AWAY...

...LEAVING ONLY THE SPIDER'S MASK TO GIVE MY LIFE MEANING?

Look at him: shaken. Uncertain.

Whoever I am... Sergei or Dmitri... Hunter or Chameleon...

...I'll have your head tonight, Spider-Man.

And, in destroying *you*...

...I will have found *myself*, at last.

A final game, though, before I allow you into my security chamber.

First the darkness--to discon-cert you...

...then the light--to make you blind.

And now, sightless and con-fused...

...we'll see if you are indeed *worthy*...

FRAKKK

COME ON, CHAMELEON--

RRAKK

--YOU SHOULD KNOW BETTER THAN ANY-ONE--

--THAT I'VE BEEN DANCING THROUGH DEATHTRAPS LIKE THIS--

CHAKKAK

--FOR YEARS!

ZZAKKK

A FEW MORE FEET AND I'VE GOT YOU, MAGGOT! A FEW MORE FEET AND--

THE DOOR!

IF I DON'T GET THIS LEAP JUST RIGHT--

--THOSE SPEARS'LL TAKE ME *APART!*

KRONNKK!

...of facing me.

WELCOME, SPIDER-MAN --

--TO YOUR SECOND DEATH.

THE *FIRST* TIME I KILLED YOU, I MADE THE MISTAKE OF RESURRECTING YOU, BUT *THIS* TIME--

--IT WILL BE *PERMANENT!*

THWAK!

K-THOW!

YOU'RE NOT KRAVEN. YOU'RE JUST A PATHETIC COPY.

AND I DON'T *WANT* ANY COPIES.

I WANT *YOU*, CHAMELEON!

NO!

I AM NOT A COPY!

I AM

N--

SSSNAP!

CAN'T DO IT WITHOUT HIDING, CAN YOU? HAVEN'T GOT THE GUTS TO FACE ME MAN-TO-MAN!

YOU'D RATHER HURT INNOCENT PEOPLE THAN RISK YOUR OWN NECK!

AHHHH!

YOU'D RATHER DESTROY A DECENT FAMILY LIKE THE PARKERS THAN--

I... DIDN'T DESTROY THEM... SPIDER-MAN--

--YOU DID!

THE ONE WHO... LED ME TO THE PARKERS... SAID THEY WERE THE PERFECT WAY TO GET TO YOU! HE KNEW ...THEY WERE VULNERABLE--

--WHY DIDN'T YOU?

WHY DID YOU LET IT HAPPEN, SPIDER-MAN? WHY DID YOU LET THEM HURT MY FAMILY?!

WHY?!

HE KNOWS IT'S NOT HIS FACE, NOT HIS VOICE.

BUT HE CAN'T ESCAPE PETER PARKER'S EYES, CURSING HIM. CAN'T ESCAPE THE HARD TRUTH HIS OWN LIPS SPIT AT HIM.

FOR A MOMENT, SPIDER-MAN IS SHAKEN TO THE CORE OF HIS BEING...

...AND IT'S A MOMENT THE CHAMELEON TAKES ADVANTAGE OF...

...WITH A BIO-ELECTRIC BLAST FROM THE HUNTER'S VEST.

KRKKRRAKKK

HE BRIEFLY PONDERS PUTTING THE RIFLE TO THE SPIDER'S HEAD, BLASTING HIM INTO EXTINCTION.

BUT THE EFFECTS OF THE BLAST ARE ALREADY FADING, SPIDER-MAN IS STIRRING.

KRAVEN, PERHAPS, WOULD TAKE THE RISK.

SMERDYAKOV DOESN'T.

IT'S OVER, NOW. HE KNOWS IT.

HE'S NOT THE MASTER, HE NEVER **WAS.**

HE IS WHAT HE HAS ALWAYS **BEEN.**

AN INFERIOR COPY.

A SIMPERING SLAVE.

SO HE STAGGERS THROUGH THE GRAVEYARD--PELTED BY RAIN, DEAFENED BY THUNDER.

SO HE WAITS FOR THE SPIDER TO DESCEND.

Sergei!

I'm **sorry**, Sergei! I **failed** you!

But why **should** I be sorry? I should be glad! Kravinoff doesn't deserve vengeance... he deserves contempt!

He was a brutal monster! He was--

My best friend! I loved him!

I hated him!

...I...

SNAKT

AND THE TRUTH, SO LONG DENIED, SO LONG REPRESSED...

BLAM

...EXPLODES LIKE A RIFLE-BLAST IN HIS MIND.

Not his friend, *no*. Just his servant-boy. A faceless boot-licker, to be abused and reviled.

BLAM BLAM

How many times did he open his heart... share his youthful secrets--and invite me to share mine?

No, that's not so! He *did* care about me! *He did!*

He could be so generous... so loving...

...so unbelievably *cruel*.

...a *Nothing!*

BLAM!

When the revolution came and the Kravinoffs fell, your family fled to America--and you did not even deign to say goodbye.

But, fool that I was, I still clung to our imagined bond and raced to America to join you.

You never forgot, did you, Sergei, who was the *servant* and who, the *master*? You never ignored a chance to remind me that I only existed... to reflect *you*. That Smerdyakov was, and always would be...

We each found our destiny here, didn't we? You as the world's greatest Hunter and I as the greatest...

...non-entity.

As the Chameleon, I spent years trying to make myself into someone worthy of your respect. Trying to stand as tall as you did.

But I see now that the only thing we two truly have in common...

...is a coward's death.

NO!

SMAK!

KROOK!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO CHEAT ME THE WAY *HE* DID!

YOU ARE **NOT** GOING TO **CHEAT** ME!!

POK!

SWAK!

PLEASE, SIR--

--WH-WHATEVER IT IS YOU THINK I'VE DONE--

--I *BEG* YOUR F-F-*FORGIVENESS!*

I...I AM JUST *SMERDYAKOV!*

JUST A LOWLY *SERVANT!*

SHUT UP!

DON'T PLAY ANY MORE GAMES WITH ME!

I'VE HAD *ENOUGH* OF YOUR STINKING GAMES!

YOU *BROUGHT THEM BACK*, YOU MISERABLE SCUM!

YOU *BROUGHT THEM BACK*-- AND THEN TOOK THEM *AWAY* AGAIN!

AND FOR *THAT* YOU'RE GOING TO--

NO... *PLEASE!* DON'T HURT ME!

I...I'M NOT EVEN *W-WORTHY* OF DEATH!

TO DIE-- ONE MUST HAVE *LIVED!*

AND I... I HAVE *NEVER* LIVED!

HOW C-C-*COULD* I HAVE?

I HAVE NO *NAME!* NO *FACE!* NO *SOUL!*

I...AM A *NOTHING!*

A *NOTHING!*

NOTHING.

NOTHING.

NOTHING.

NOTHING

NOTHING.

SPIDER-MAN TURNS AWAY...

...FOR SUCH NAKED ANGUISH IS HARD TO LOOK UPON.

THIS, HE MARVELS, IS THE GREAT ENEMY I WAS SO *DESPERATE* TO DESTROY?

ALL THE RAGE, ALL THE HATRED IS GONE FOR NOW. WHAT REMAINS IS PITY AND COMPASSION.

HE WANTS NO PART OF THAT.

SO HE SEARCHES FOR A NEW **FOCUS** FOR HIS HATE.

THE CHAMELEON SAID THAT SOMEONE **LED** HIM TO THE PARKERS. SPIDER-MAN IS DETERMINED TO FIND OUT WHO THAT SOMEONE IS. SOMEONE, HE REALIZES, WHO **KNOWS** HIS SECRET.

WITH LUCK, HE THINKS, I'LL SUCCEED.

WITH LUCK...

INDEX OF IDENTITIES
VERDE
SIMULACRUM RESEARCH
SPIDER-MAN: FOR YOUR EYES O
PARKER FAMILY HISTORY

...I'LL HATE AGAIN.

INDEX OF IDENTITIES
VERDE
SIMULACRUM RESEARCH
SPIDER-MAN: FOR YOUR EYES ONLY
PARKER FAMILY HISTORY

HELLO, OLD BUDDY.
IF YOU'VE PUNCHED UP MY NAME AND OPENED THIS FILE, THEN I CAN SAFELY ASSUME, YOU'VE DEFEATED THE CHAMELEON.
AH, WELL-- I EXPECTED YOU WOULD EVENTUALLY. BUT NOT BEFORE I INVADED YOUR LIFE AGAIN.
NOT BEFORE I USED YOUR PRECIOUS MOMMY AND DADDY TO CAUSE A... SMALL AMOUNT OF SUFFER-ING.
CALL IT A LITTLE PAYBACK FOR WHAT I SUFFERED WHEN YOU KILLED MY FATHER.
IN OTHER WORDS, OLD BUDDY--

GOTCHA

GOTCHA

GOTCHA

GOTCHA

GOTCHA

GOTCHA

GOTCHA!

THE GREEN GOBLIN'S VOICE ECHOES THROUGH THE MANSION...

...AND THROUGH THE DEPTHS OF SPIDER-MAN'S SOUL.

NEXT: SHRIEKING PART ONE